

OUT OF TIME

Issue No. 12

Out of Control--Lesbian Committee to Support Women Political Prisoners

JANUARY

LEXINGTON WOMEN THREATENED

In November Out of Control received a letter from a group of lesbians doing support work for women political prisoners in Lexington, Ky. The letter outlined in detail the racist threats and harassment they've been getting since August. The following is excerpts from that letter.

Something ugly is going on in Lexington, Ky, and we want to talk about it. Members of the women's and lesbian community, Black and white, are being threatened and terrorized. We believe that as more of us are informed of this attack on our community, the more empowered we will be to resist these threats. What is happening here may be part of a larger story: recent F.B.I. harassment of activities and state repression especially during and since the Gulf War. However, what is happening here is definitely part of an older, persistent story: racist attacks on Black women and the use of racism and misogyny to scare and intimidate, to keep Black and white women from doing any political or cultural work together.

The story begins sometime in mid-August when two lesbians received letters which targeted one Black lesbian, whom we'll call "X".

These racist letters warned the recipients that they should stay away from "X" and that the "organization" would "be taking care of 'X'." The writer(s) claimed to be part of an unnamed racist hate group and identified themselves as lesbians. The letters were signed "Yours in sisterhood."

In early September, organizers --all white women-- of "Conspiracy Of Voices," a program about political prisoners, scheduled for Sept 16, began receiving threats. One organizer received two letters in which this same group threatened to stop the event because "X" was involved in the program. The threats included slashed tires, used tampons on windshields, a dead baby opossum, and death threats. The organizers of the Take Back the Night rally and march, scheduled for September 22, received hate letters.

Kate Black, one of the Lexington women writes, "Many of us expected, and all of us hoped, that the threats would stop after the ... march. The threats continue and an expanding circle of people and organizations are the recipients, and all the letters still single out "X" as the primary focus... We are a group of women, some of us the direct recipients of these threats, some of us not, Black and white, lesbian and straight, who refuse to be silent about such hate directed at all of us. We must not be afraid to speak out against racism just like we must not be afraid to combat homophobia. Oppression is oppression wherever and however it rears its ugly head. Silence is complicity."

Send letters of solidarity to: 269 Elmwood Drive, Lexington, KY 40505.

Cynthia Johnson: Sentenced But Free

Cynthia is a Etobicoke school teacher charged with attempted murder for half-severing the penis of a colleague who attacked her. The judge refused to accept the evidence supporting Cynthia's rape charges, allowing the defense to portray her as a crazed vengeful ex-lover rather than a strong individual defending herself. Cynthia Johnson did not show up for her sentencing on Sept. 6, and is still free from the grips of the prison system.

Cynthia Johnson is by no means alone in her situation. There are thousands of women behind bars on charges of murder/manslaughter for defending themselves or their children. A 1977 study done in a Chicago women's prison revealed 40% of the inmates were incarcerated for killing partners who had beat them over long periods of time. According to Dr. Antonia Novello "the home is actually a more dangerous place for American women than the city streets." More than a third of women slain in this country die at the hands of husbands or boyfriends, and domestic violence is the single largest cause of injury to women in the U.S."

When women act to protect their own lives against men's violence, they are severely penalized and sometimes mur-

**YOU CAN'T JAIL THE SPIRIT
POLITICAL PRISONERS IN THE U.S.
ON BRAINSTORM - KPFA RADIO 94.1 FM
FRIDAYS, NOON-1PM
JANUARY 3-FEBRUARY 7**

The U.S. justice department maintains that there are no political prisoners held in this country... Hear inside the walls from people who have resisted.

Jan. 10 Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War

Jan. 17 International Issues

Jan. 24 Control Units & Lockdowns

Jan. 31 Women Who Kill in Self-Defense

dered. The women convicted of killing in Self-defense are frequently sentenced to longer prison terms than men who kill their mates. F.B.I. stats indicate that fewer men are charged with first- or second-degree murder for killing a woman they have known than are women who kill men they have known. We as women struggling for our right to defend ourselves, and for control over our bodies, cannot forget the thousands of women inside who out of desperation or rage, were forced to or chose to fight back.

For more information contact Ecomedia, P.O. Box 915, Stn F, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 2N9.

Geronimo Denied Parole

Geronimo Ji Jaga was denied parole, again, in Tehachapi on 12-4-91. The hearing was well attended given the distance of the prison.

Geronimo will be transferred to Vacaville for evaluation of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) which he has suffered from since being sprayed by agent-orange in Vietnam.

His attorney, Adjoa Aiyetoro, made it clear that Geronimos' name is legally changed from Pratt and requested the parole board call him by his legal name.

For more information call the Geronimo Committee: (510) 268-0979.

DEATH ROW JUVENILES

As of July 1 there are 31 juveniles on deathrow in the united states. That's more than any other country monitored by Amnesty. Since the supreme kourt ruled in '89 that the execution of offenders as young as 16 was constitutional, eight states have lowered the acceptable age to 12.

The united nations established standards in '89 that 72 countries abide by (including Libya and South Africa). It states "that capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offenses committed by persons below 18 years of age." Execution of juveniles when it does occur happens in countries like Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Barbados, and Bangladesh.

Amnesty studied 23 cases and evaluated the whole process. At least 12 of the juveniles were documented victims of severe physical or sexual abuse, 10 were regular users of alcohol and drugs from an early age and 14 showed evidence of mental illness or brain damage. At least 11 defendants had an IQ below the so called average for their age.

These kinds of facts may not have had any effect on sentencing by the judges but in a "disturbing" number of cases these factors were never explored by court appointed attorneys; nor were they brought before the court as mitigating circumstances against capital punishment. In some cases the age of the defendant was not noted; in others it was left to the jury to decide "whether or not" age was relevant.

Self-Defense

When they hit me, I went limp.
When they kicked me, I tried
To protect my
Soft parts
Tried to draw my arms
Over my breasts
To shield them
From the hardness of their
Policemen's shoes
But I didn't kick back.
I did not seize the time.
I didn't take the opportunity

To kick
To punch
Or even bite or scratch.

I went limp.

Resisted

Passively.

I thought passively would be the best defense.

I thought that they would hurt me less

If I didn't fight back.

So I was a good girl and didn't hit.

But my strategy backfired:

I was the recipient

Of their most brutal blows

And all my passive resistance

Didn't impress them

From actively

Wrecking their violence

Upon my body.

By refusing to strike back at my attackers

I participated

In my own attack.

The essence of self-defense

Is to love yourself so well,

Esteem yourself so highly,

That you will defend

Yourself from violence

As a mother defends her children

As a guerilla defends her comrades

As a revolutionary defends her revolution.

1975

DHORUBA BIN-WAHAD

The new york state court of appeals handed Dhoruba Bin-Wahad another defeat in his battle to stay free. Basically they reversed the reversal that got Dhoruba out of jail after 19 years. The case was remanded to a lower court for a hearing on other possible grounds for dismissal in the original petition. As far as we can understand it all, Dhoruba was released in 1989 because the state withheld vital information during his original trial (something like california has done with Geronimo's case). Now if the state admits that they should not get away with this kind of illegal maneuvering, they will have to review several other political cases from the 70's. The most notable case is that of the new york 3. To open this can of worms would expose more and more dirty tricks used to crush and disrupt the Black Movement of the 70's.

A petition campaign is underway to demand that Dhoruba remain free pending his hearing. For more information and to get copies of the petition contact CAMPAIGN TO FREE BLACK POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS OF WAR, PO BOX 339, KINGSBRIDGE STATION, BRONX, NY, 10463, or call (718)624-0800.

RELEASE SILVIA!

Silvia Baraldini has reapplied for repatriation to Italy. The Italian Government will file their request to have Silvia transferred to Italy in February. We ask you to join in the campaign to demand the repatriation of Silvia. Send a mailgram to Attorney General Barr by calling 1-800-888-5284 and ask for message No. 1125. For more information contact Release Silvia!, 3543 18th Street, No. 30, San Francisco, CA 94110.

Attica Trial 20 Years Later

The trial continues for the Attica Brothers in Buffalo, n.y. The Brothers are the plaintiffs in this action brought against the warden, the n.y. dept. of corrections and a few other choice individuals who systematically beat, tortured, and even raped and killed prisoners after the Attica uprising in Sept 1971.

There was an uprising and the prison was taken over by the prisoners and held for 4 days. The demands were for basic living conditions and treatment as human beings. The state of new york responded by dropping tear gas from helicopters and indiscriminate firing of a multitude of weapons into D yard. Forty-three men died that day and hundreds more were stripped naked, forced to lie in the mud, walk a gauntlet of broken glass between two lines of riot equipped, pissed off prison guards. At first the state filed charges against some of the prisoners for killing some of the hostages that had been taken, but that turned out to be just another pig lie. All who died that day were shot down by the storm troopers of the state.

On 12/11/91, after 9 weeks of testimony from more than 60 witnesses the plaintiffs rested their case. National guardsmen, state troopers, doctors, and many prisoners told some of the most gruesome horror stories about what happened at Attica. Stories of broken bones, cigarette burns, every imaginable abuse known to men; up to and including anal rape by a phillips screwdriver and cold blooded, point blank range murder.

The state of new york is attempting to justify its actions in the defense presentation. We can't figure out any excuses. The only thing that comes to mind is revenge and things like cruelty and total inhumanity. No monster movie could have done it better. Their sideshow should take about two weeks and then it goes to a 6 person jury for deliberation.

This seems to be a clear cut case for a long overdue victory for the Attica Brothers and their defense team led by Liz Fink. We send our utmost respect, support, and love to all of these comrades.

80's Means Prison Population Doubles

Once again the united states is #1 in the world. The top of the heap of punishers. Jumped from 3rd place to undisputed first. Unsurpassed anywhere in the punitive skills of putting people in prison. More than a million now and climbing at an unbelievable rate. Here's a brief world perspective on the subject:

incarceration rates per 100,000

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| soviet union | 268 |
| south africa | 333 |
| united states | 426 |
| australia | 72 |
| netherlands | 40 |

Keeping this many citizens locked up cost hella bucks--- at least \$16 billion a year. In 1987 65% of those imprisoned went in for property, drug, and public disorder crimes. An additional 15% had only violated conditions of parole (curfew, failure to program as directed, dirty urine test etc.)

The percentage of Black prisoners grows at an even more alarming rate. In mid-July '91 u.s. dept. of " just-us" released another of its studies simply titled Race of Prisoners Admitted to State and Federal Institutions 1926-86. In '26, 78% of state and federal prisoners were white,

21% were Black, and 1% listed as other. Then, year by year, the percentage of white prisoners dropped while that of Black prisoners regularly increased. By '86 only 55% of state and federal prisoners were white, while 44% were Black. Those listed as others remained at 1%.

The more than 100% increase in ratio of Black to white prisoners cannot be explained by population trends (the number of Blacks relative to the general population was about the same, 10% in '26 and 12% in '86) or anything else. The governments own numbers clearly shows that they are willing to spend more than \$7 billion annually to lock up Black people. We call this genocide. To criminalize an entire race of people through the so-called justice system and then to lock them up and throw away the key is institutional racism. Unfortunately this is one of the founding pillars of america's history, and continues. In south africa 729 Black males per 100,000 are in prison; in the united states the rate is 3,109 per 100,000.

The f.b.i. stats indicate that since '80, while the prison population was doubling, the crime rate only dropped 3.5%. So don't believe the hype when it comes to that new law and order bullshit that they always put out there. Learn the truth and speak it wherever you go.

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Erik Larsen, u.s. military resister, was sentenced November 19 to six months at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Yolanda Huet-Vaughn, 40 year old family physician, mother of three was sentenced to 2 1/2 years at Leavenworth, and given a dishonorable discharge for desertion with intent to avoid hazardous duty. Write to General Daniel Christman, CG, US Army Engineer Center, Fort Leonard Wood, MO 65473. Urge him to exercise "clemency." Write letters of support to Yolanda at Drawer A, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027.

Enrique Gonzalez, an El Salvadoran, was attending Nova University School of Law in Florida when his Marine

Reserve unit was called up. Although his application for discharge as a conscientious objector was approved by the investigating officer, prosecution continued. He was sentenced to 2 1/2 years at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for desertion and missing movement. Demand Enrique's, and all USMC war resisters' release. Write: General Carl E. Mundy, Commandant USMC, HQ USMC, Washington DC 20001. Write Enrique at 119 68 1627/0311, Marine Corps Brig, Bldg. 1041, Camp Lejeune, NC 28452.

There many more war resisters doing time or waiting to be sentenced. For more information contact The ANTI-WARrior, 48 Shattuck Sq., Box 129, Berkeley, CA 94704 or call 415-273-2427.

Coalition Formed for Battered Women Inside

The California Coalition For Battered Women In Prison (CCBWP) is a collection of individuals and groups who have recently organized to plan a strategy for assisting battered women in prison seeking clemency/commutation of their sentences. The CCBWP is currently drafting a procedure by which battered women in prison can request clemency or commutation for the governor. The CCBWP is also recruiting pro bono attorneys to assist these women in preparation of their requests, and is seeking to identify all battered women currently serving terms in California state prisons.

Meeting are held monthly. The next meeting will be held on January 22 from 6-8 PM at Cooley, Godward, One Maritime Plaza, 20th Floor, San Francisco (at Clay and Front Street). If you are interested in volunteering your time, you are welcome to attend the next meeting.

In addition the CCBWP has also formed a number of committees, and volunteers are encouraged to participate. The following is a list of committees, a brief description, and the contact person(s):

Development of Clemency/Commutation of Sentence Process and Materials Committee -- This is a committee to develop a procedure by which women can apply for clemency or commutation of their sentences to the governor. This committee will also keep track of legislative development. Contact Deeana Jang at 627-0200 ext. 236,

Ellen Barry at (415) 255-7036, or Rebecca Isaacs at (510) 372-3211.

Identification of Women in Prison for Killing Their Abusers -- This committee is involved in attempting to collect data and identify the women in prison who have been convicted for killing their abusers. Contact Nancy Lemon at (510) 525-3164 or Sarah Calderon at (707) 257-7259.

Pro Bono Committee -- This committee is involved in recruiting attorneys to assist women in filling out the paperwork to request clemency of commutation of their sentences. Contact Maria Ramos at (415) 821-4553 or Kathryn Beck at (415) 326-7600.

Fund Raising Committee -- This committee will attempt to locate funds and apply for grants for the CCBWP. Contact Mirouche Kardel at (415) 255-7036 or 929-1915.

Media/Press Committee -- This committee will be writing articles for local publications including newsletters at law firms and legal publications. To assist in writing a non-legal article, contact Kathy Catlos at (510) 549-3777. To assist in developing articles for legal publications contact Nancy Staudt at (415) 928-8375.

For general information, contact Ellen Barry or Minouche Kardel at (415) 255-7036.

CAMPAIGN TO SAVE MUMIA

Mumia Abu-Jamal, former Black Panther Party member, MOVE Supporter and political prisoner has been on death row in Pennsylvania since 1982. There is an urgent campaign under way to raise funds so that Mumia can proceed with a major legal appeal in his case. Your help is needed to overturn Mumia's death penalty conviction.

In 1982 Mumia was convicted of killing a Philadelphia policeman and sentenced to death despite evidence seriously questioning his guilt. Over the last decade, appellate courts have refused to recognize the racism and political bias that led to Mumia's conviction.

Mumia has always maintained his innocence. He was convicted by a nearly all white jury and placed on death row because of his involvement as a teenager in the Black Panther Party and his later support of the MOVE organization.

There is very little time left to stop the railroad of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the man that the Black community of Philadelphia calls "the voice of the voiceless."

All of Mumia's direct legal appeals have been exhausted. A death warrant can be signed at any time. He has one chance left to launch a major legal battle challenging his original conviction. Your financial support can make this appeal a reality.

A tax deductible legal defense fund has been set up to support Mumia Abu-Jamal. Please send your donations to Equal Justice USA/LDF, PO Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782. Equal Justice USA is spearheading the fight to stop the racist death penalty and save Mumia's life. If you would like to do more please write to Equal Justice USA.

IN MEMORY

Barbara Brasseur, long time political activist and supporter of political prisoners and Prisoners of War died August 1991. This dyke sister was a carpenter who developed a brain tumor. She will be missed.

LAGAI / OOC
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